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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL PRESIDENT VALERIE ERVIN,
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, 7-ELEVEN AND OTHERS BREAK GROUND ON
NEW KING STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN**

SILVER SPRING, MD— Today, Montgomery County Council President Valerie Ervin joined the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Montgomery County Department of Parks, Harvey Maisel of Maisel-Hollins Development Company, representatives from 7-Eleven and others to break ground on the new King Street Community Garden located at 7875 Eastern Avenue in Silver Spring.

“I am proud to announce the opening of this new community garden at King Street and Eastern Avenue,” said Montgomery County Council President Valerie Ervin. “For almost two years, I have worked with the Department of Parks and Mr. Harvey Maisel to open this garden in south Silver Spring.”

Attending today’s groundbreaking ceremony: Director of Parks Mary R. Bradford, Harvey Maisel of Maisel-Hollins Development Company, representatives from 7-Eleven, Montgomery College, Silver Spring Green, South Silver Spring Neighborhood Association, IMPACT Silver Spring, Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce, Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee, Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board and Silver Spring Regional Center.

“Community gardens continue to prove wonderfully popular park amenities,” said Montgomery County Department of Parks Director of Parks Mary R. Bradford. “I want to thank Council President Ervin, Mr. Maisel and 7-Eleven for helping us to bring this garden to this community.”

The King Street Community Garden is the result of a three-way lease agreement between the Department of Parks, 7-Eleven and the Maisel-Hollins Development Company, which had plans to develop the site for other uses.

“It is with great pleasure that we can now move beyond meetings and paperwork to prepping the site for gardening. This site, which is located in a densely populated urban

area, is more than just a fruitful partnership between the government and private enterprise. It enhances the lives of residents by increasing community access to nutritious foods, and by promoting social interactions among neighbors,” added Ervin.

The King Street Community Garden features 29 plots, each of 200-square-feet, with water and deer fencing available. More than 50 applications were received for gardening at this location. The location is full with all plots assigned. Weather permitting the site will open to the gardeners later this month.

“One of the greatest benefits of not only the community gardens but parks in general, really, are the way they bring communities together through shared spaces and experiences,” added Bradford. “For example, many community gardeners have told us how they’ve met their neighbors for the first time at the garden in the parks or shared produce they’ve grown with one another, in real ways these parks are making a difference in their lives.”

Ervin was instrumental in launching the Department of Parks community gardens program in May 2009: “I first became interested in community gardens when a resident from Eastern Village Cohousing asked about community gardens in the downcounty area at a meeting. Since then, I have become an avid supporter of the Community Gardens program, which has opened seven sites in parks and two sites on MCPS property,” stated Ervin.

In two short years, the parks community gardens program has grown to include more than 600 community gardeners on 10 locations operated by the parks department throughout the county: Bradley Park, Briggs Chaney, Emory Grove Center, Fenton Street Local Park, King Street, Maple Avenue, Parklawn, Rocking Horse Center, Sligo Mill Overlook and South Germantown Recreational Park.

“Since there is high demand at the County’s other community gardens, I look forward to continuing to collaborate with many more organizations in the future,” noted Ervin.

For more information on the Department of Parks community gardens program, visit www.ParksCommunityGardens.org.